

Classic UK Mini bodyshell plates – (Not chassis /VIN plate)



When BMC type cars were made in the 1950's to the 80's, the bodyshell would usually be made up from sub-components, often from different factories. Each main component had a serial number attached to it for internal use only, usually on a welded-on steel plate with embossed numbers, about 0.5" high

Once all the components of the body were made into a fully built-up assembly , only then it would have been allocated a Body Number.

This number was kept on file to tie in with the build details of Chassis Number and later Commission number and latterly the VIN number in the 1980's

Main bodyshell component plates

On the Mini, the main bodyshell would usually have numbers attached with numbers on one or both front floorpans and on the front end. I can only presume there was some internal coding to identify types IE Saloon/Estate/Van/Pickup etc.

Longbridge built cars had some detail differences to Cowley ones as Austin had different practices to Morris but by the end of the 60's the two companies came together more closely.



Floor tag 1963 saloon

Front End Plate - FE plates

This plate, being prominent in the engine bay often survives on original cars as it's away from the worst of the rust lower down , so it has attracted attention over the years. The factory details were never kept on file so has been subject to much amateur debate by subsequent restorers.

The front end would have a plate attached to it , which on the Mini consisted of the windscreen surround and toeboard forwards (see picture at top of article) . These would usually have the prefix FE... on the plate (Front End !)

From 1959 to late 1970's the FE number lives above the radiator cowl on the inner wing just above where the chassis number would have gone on a Mk1/2 and it continued to be used into the 70's.



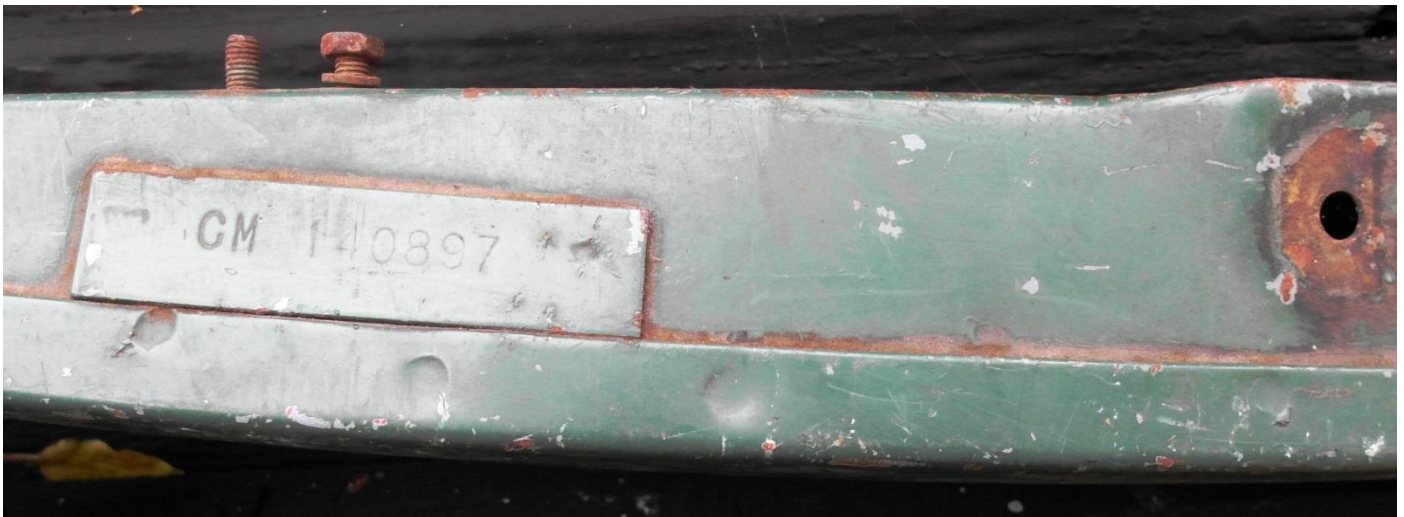
Body Numbers

1960's : Early 60's: This was on an aluminium plate similar to the later engine number with embossed letters and screwed on to bulkhead



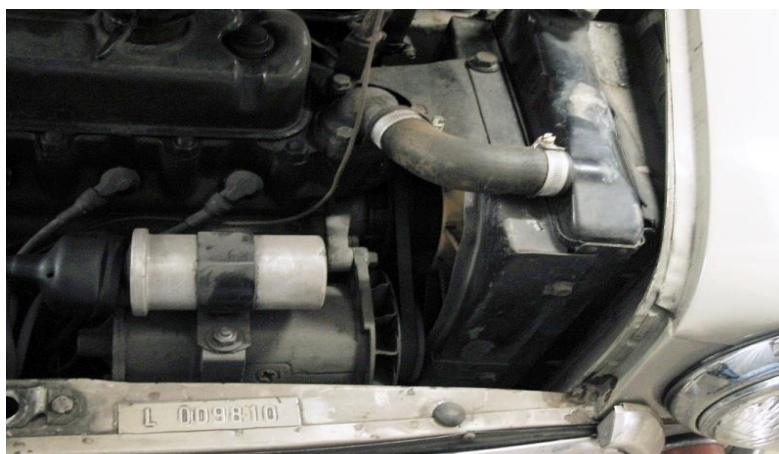
Mid 60's: The body number was generally fitted to the front panel on a welded on plate certainly on Longbridge built cars

Below is a Mark 1 non-Cooper that shows approximate position of plate



By the end of the 1960's the body number was usually (but not always) on the left hand side of the slam panel as the Chassis and Commission plates were then mounted on the right hand side of the slam panel. Mini Mokes have a different style of body number.

This is a late 60's Mk2 car where the plate is now embossed, broadly the same style as the FE plate, with embossed letters about 0.5" high



1970's: Early 1970's cars generally have a stamped plate. The prefix and the suffix were put on all plates and the serial number put on after with a different type size. D20S refers to Clubman. (D20S... as a Commission number refers to Mini 850's, so it's quite confusing!). It's also quite confusing as to why the return to a stamped plate rather than the embossed type one



Late 1970's cars have a large embossed plate similar to the FE type of plate



And a late 70's van (V denotes van)

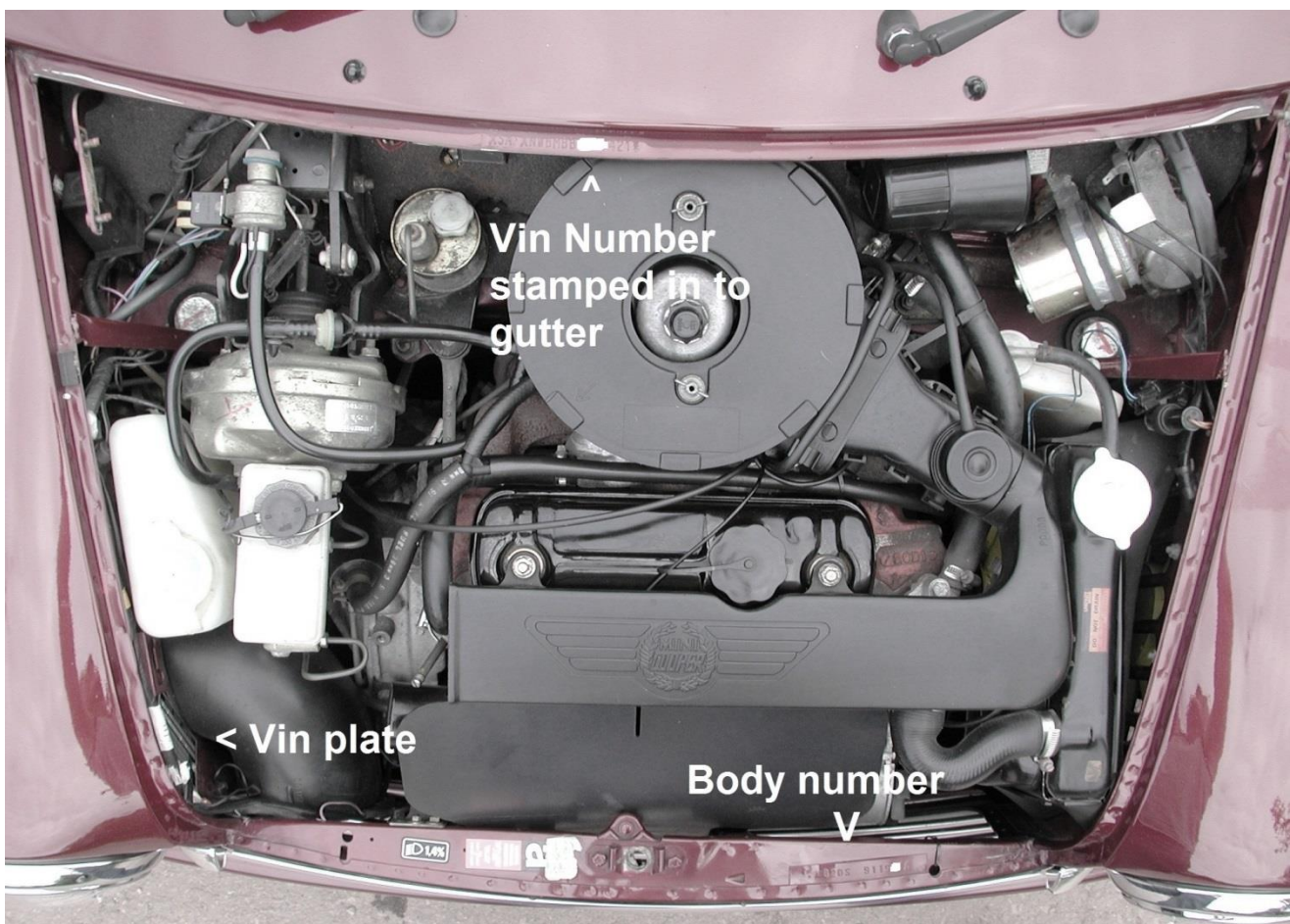


1980-90's:

This picture shows location of VIN number from 1980 till approx. late 80's



Below shows an early 90's UK car. The body number plate was on a thin embossed strip. On 1980's cars the VIN plate was on the LH inner wing



I hope this gives some indication of the types and make-up of the plates, but I have to admit that my knowledge isn't all-embracing and is largely based on what I have observed over the years and would benefit from input from anyone with original detail knowledge

I am guessing that the style of body number plate may have varied depending on which plant was making the bodyshell. Certainly Morris at Cowley had some styles of manufacture that varied to Austin at Longbridge. Cowley-built cars tended to have stamped chassis plates and Longbridge embossed theirs for instance. Pressed Steel Fisher made sub-assemblies and assembled some models of car such as Elves and Hornets

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